Politics and Emotions Investigated Comparatively

Fact Sheet

Project Information

POLEMIC

Grant agreement ID: 759079

DOI
10.3030/759079

EC signature date
9 November 2017

Funded under
EXCELLENT SCIENCE - European Research Council (ERC)

Total cost
€ 1,499,664,00

EU contribution
€ 1,499,664,00

Coordinated by
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM
Netherlands

Start date
1 April 2018

End date
31 March 2024

This project is featured in...
Objective

Many claim that politicians make more, and more extreme, emotional appeals than ever before, because these appeals win over the emotional citizen. With highly emotive language people like Donald Trump, Geert Wilders or Marine Le Pen are pounding on the portals to power. Do such emotional appeals affect citizens’ political choices? Yes, they can. But, citizens’ existing emotional attachments to parties, leaders or issues moderate the success of emotional appeals. POLEMIC will extend existing theory and use novel methods to explain when (types of) emotional appeals are persuasive, and when emotional attachments prevent persuasion.

Do politicians actually make more emotional appeals than in the past? And if so why are they doing it? We lack historical data of emotional appeals so we cannot answer these questions. POLEMIC will provide unique, historical data (1945-now, 9 countries) of emotional appeals by politicians in their speeches. I develop and test 3 alternative theories from different intellectual traditions that explain why politicians make emotional appeals: is it either (1) a vote-maximizing strategy, (2) a product of the personality of a politician or (3) just fashionable?

POLEMIC analyses emotional appeals of politicians and the emotional responses of citizens to these appeals. Emotional appeals are texts, and emotions are experiences by the brain. To measure them POLEMIC will use innovative methods in political science: automated text analysis to extract emotion from appeals; physiological measurement to measure emotions.

POLEMIC offers a ground-breaking combination of a macro-perspective (what politicians say) and a micro-perspective (how citizens respond) and forms a bridge between party politics and political psychology. The project’s output will indicate the importance of emotion in the decision-making of citizens, and the level of rationality that is behind politicians’ decision to make emotional appeals.
Fields of science

social sciences  >  psychology
social sciences  >  political sciences

Keywords

- Political strategy
- political parties
- emotions
- emotional appeals
- physiological responsiveness
- leadership

Programme(s)

H2020-EU.1.1. - EXCELLENT SCIENCE - European Research Council (ERC)  

Topic(s)

ERC-2017-STG - ERC Starting Grant

Call for proposal

ERC-2017-STG

See other projects for this call

Funding Scheme

ERC-STG - Starting Grant

Coordinator

UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM
Net EU contribution

€ 1 499 664,00

Address

Spui 21
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Region

West-Nederland > Noord-Holland > Groot-Amsterdam

Activity type

Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

Links

Contact the organisation Website
Participation in EU R&I programmes
HORIZON collaboration network

Other funding

€ 0,00

Beneficiaries (1)

UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM
Netherlands
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€ 1 499 664,00

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**Last update:** 6 February 2024

**Permalink:** [https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/759079](https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/759079)

European Union, 2024